



THE NAVAJO NATION

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Begaye-Nez Administration Advocate for Navajo Police Memorial



Navajo Nation Vice President Jonathan Nez attended the inaugural Navajo Nation Fallen Warriors event at the Shiprock Youth Complex. The Begaye-Nez administration is moving forward with developing a memorial to honor fallen officers of the Navajo Police.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.— Navajo Nation Vice President Jonathan Nez has long advocated for construction of a memorial to honor Navajo Police who reached the end of watch during their service to the Navajo people.

Eleven Navajo Police lost their lives in the line of duty, a clear indication that public servants in the law enforcement field put their lives on the line daily.

The Navajo Police officers who bravely gave their lives for the Navajo people are: Alex K. Yazzie, Ernest Jesus Montoya Sr., Darrell Cervandez Curley, Wilsonfred A. Filfred, Esther Todachenee, Samuel Anthony Redhouse, Hoskie Allen Gene, Andy Begay, Roy Lee Stanley, Loren Whitehat, and Burton Begay.

On May 15, Vice President Nez and Jesse Delmar, Navajo Division of Public Safety Executive Director, attended

the 2016 Navajo Nation Fallen Warriors event at the Shiprock Youth Complex, featuring a bike run by the Honor Riders.

“We must remember our fallen officers and honor them for their public service of protecting and serving the Navajo Nation,” Vice President Nez said. “Thank you to the Navajo Police for your dedicated service and selfless public duty.”

The event featured a 21-gun salute while Jim Lynch performed “Taps” and “Amazing Grace” on bagpipe.

“I am deeply humbled to be among these true Navajo heroes,” Vice President Nez said. “I am also grateful to the families of these brave warriors who gave their very lives for our safety and freedom.”

“The Begaye-Nez administration recognizes their sacrifices and will begin to create a Navajo Nation

fitting to honor our heroes forever,” he added.

The gym was filled to capacity. The Shiprock High School Junior ROTC posted colors, followed by the National Anthem by Miss Northern Navajo Teen Nicole Keeswood. After an observed moment of silence for the fallen, the dispatcher from the Shiprock Police District moved the audience, as she called out the names of fallen officers during the Last Roll Call.

Delmar thanked the participation of the Navajo Hopi Honor Riders for their participation and spoke about the national observance of fallen officers.

He said, “It is only appropriate that we respect the fallen officers of our tribal police. May 15 to 21 is National Police Week and we reach out to our fellow officers nationally and honor their fallen officers, too.”

Delmar said, “The Fallen Warriors recognition turned out to be a fabulous event for the family of the 11 Navajo Policemen who lost their lives in the line of duty, while working for the Navajo people. I feel this recognition was long overdue and I certainly thank the police officers who made this happen.”

The families of the Navajo fallen officers received plaques dedicated to the memory of their fallen warrior. They were engraved with the message, “When a police officer is killed, it’s not agency that loses an officer, it is an entire nation.”

There are 248 tribal police officers and 35 criminal investigators working for the Navajo Nation, an area that stretches more than 27,000 square miles across three states. Navajo Police are trained using the Arizona Peace Officer Standards and

Training.

The Office of the President and Vice President thank the Navajo Police, especially the Shiprock District, for their valuable assistance and resources to honor their fellow officers and their families.

On July 10, 2015, Vice President Nez made an unscheduled visit to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Washington, D.C. Jackson Brossy, Navajo Nation Washington Office Executive Director and executive protection services officer Marwin Joe accompanied Vice President Nez.

Joe, an officer with the Navajo Police, said there was no memorial on the Navajo Nation honoring the police officers killed on duty. He said the only monument that once existed was located at the tribal police academy in Tseyi, Ariz., long since defunct.

"We need to have a memorial to honor our fallen officers," Vice President Nez said.

He made pencil rubbings of the names of Navajo Policemen inscribed in marble. During this process, Vice President Nez said the monument was inspirational and a reminder to everyone that police officers put their lives on the line daily.

"We are at a point in our history where police across the country are under intense public scrutiny and negative opinion. However, we must never lose sight of the fact that these dedicated public servants serve the public trust," Vice President Nez said.

The memorial featured two curved marble walls, each stretching 304-feet in length, with the names of more than 20,000 police officers killed

in the line of duty throughout U.S. history, dating back to 1791.

Standing watch over the marble walls are two sculptures of lions with a quote from Roman historian Tacitus: "In valor there is hope."

The names of 11 Navajo Police officers are also carved in the walls. Each spring, the new names of fallen officers are added to the monument, in conjunction with National Police Week.

On May 15, Navajo Policeman Alex K. Yazzie's name was etched into the wall and his family was in Washington, D.C. for the event.

Hanging directly above Vice President Nez at his workstation are the names of three Navajo Policemen whose names he rubbed on paper at the national memorial.

One of those names is police officer Joshua Yazzie, a former officer with the Ute Tribe, was among the names on the wall. There is undoubtedly countless other Navajo officers at the memorial who worked for other law enforcement agencies.

"They are there to remind me every day," he said about the sacrifices Navajo Police make daily on behalf of the tribe.

The Begaye-Nez administration continues dialogue on construction of a memorial to honor Navajo fallen officers. The Navajo Nation Police Week Proclamation is forthcoming.



Vice President Nez visited the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Washington, D.C. last summer and was moved by the names of the fallen, especially the Navajo officers.



Navajo Police Officer Darrell C. Curley is listed among the names at the national memorial.



Navajo Nation Washington Office Executive Director Jackson Brossy, Navajo Policeman Marwin Joe, Vice President Jonathan Nez and executive staff assistant Rick Abasta paid their respects to the fallen.